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Bangalore Mirror ON SUNDAY

TEMP Max 37 | Min 22 | Humidity 22% Mostly Sunny Sensex 73,730 | Nifty 22,419 | Gold 71,486 | Silver 80,745 | Dollar 83.40 | Euro 89.21 | GBP 105.40

Water board will utilise excess rainwater harvested by tech parks, residential communities during monsoon to recharge groundwater

DROP BY DROP

Plan is to feed 74 city lakes with this water, the pilot will be done on 16 lakes across the city over the next two months

Garima Prasher
garima.prasher
@timesgroup.com
TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

PAN SHIAOZHEN/UNSPLASH

The Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) has come up with another idea to tackle Bengaluru's water crisis and rapidly depleting groundwater resources. The water board has decided to utilise excess rainwater harvested by tech parks and residential communities in the city to improve the groundwater table.

Under the initiative, the surplus rainwater harvested by various communities in the upcoming monsoon season will be used to fill nearby lakes and recharge the groundwater table.

According to BWSSB chairman V Ram Prasath Manohar, although the plan is to feed 74 city lakes with this water, the pilot will be done on 16 lakes across the city over the next two months.

"Currently, a lot of rainwater harvested by communities is going to waste after it is let out in stormwater drains and gets mixed with sewage. We are approaching communities that harvest much more water than

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12 »

> "The rainwater allowed in the lakes will be filtered; we will ensure silt doesn't enter the waterbodies
> — V Ram Prasath Manohar, chairman, BWSSB

Suburban rail: 35,527 trees identified for removal

'Sheer number of trees slated for removal raises serious questions about impact on ecosystem'

Sridhar.Vivan
@timesgroup.com
TWEETS @sridharVMIRROR

The commencement of constructing the suburban network entails identifying approximately 32,572 trees for removal.

Green activists stressed the necessity of mass transport to reduce reliance on individual vehicles, yet expressed concern over the significant tree loss for such projects. For instance, 6,600 trees are designated for Metro networks.

For example, KSR Bengaluru City-Yelahanka-Devanahalli has 7,198 trees identified, while corridor two (Baiyappanahalli terminal-Chikkabanavara) has marked 3,469 trees, corridor three (Kengeri-Cantonment-Whitefield) listed 2,072 trees, and corridor four (Heelalige to Rajanukunte) designated 2,306 trees for removal. Overall, 15,045 trees are slated for removal across these four corridors.

Additionally, depots are required, with one planned at Akkupet (17,505 trees) for corridor one and another at

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12 »

3 THINGS TO DO

01 Literature & diplomacy

Aiming at building awareness and encouraging discourse on contemporary issues and matters of public interest, the Azim Premji University public lecture series features author and diplomat Navtej Sarna, who will speak on "The Author as a Diplomat: Two wor(l)ds in One" and explore the duality of literature and diplomacy. A professional diplomat for nearly four decades, Sarna was India's Ambassador to the United States, High Commissioner to the UK, and Ambassador to Israel. His novel 'Crimson Spring' won the KLF award for the Best Fiction Book of 2022.
When: April 29, 6.30 to 8 pm
Where: Bangalore International Centre

02 All about data, AI

Get ready for a mind-blowing experience at the 'DATA & AI Summit 2024.' Join in for a day filled with cutting-edge discussions, hands-on workshops, and networking opportunities with top experts in the industry. Whether you`re a data enthusiast or an AI aficionado, this summit is the place to be. Don`t miss out on this chance to dive deep into the world of data and AI with like-minded individuals. **When: April 28, 5 pm**
Where: Draper Startup House, Koramangala

03 DnB music

Attention DnB lovers! Experience the ultimate Sunday sundowner at Koramangala Social with "#BangaloreMassive," featuring Spikey Tee, The Untitled One, GST, Chaz, and more! Get ready for a day filled with mind-blowing drum and bass, breaks, and other forms as Social transforms into a high-energy bar when work hours end, striking the perfect balance between work and play.
When: April 28, 3 pm onwards
Where: Koramangala Social

Teachers' transfer process in limbo over KAT stay order

Many teachers feel the current weightage system is arbitrary, unscientific

Sridhar Vivan
sridhar.vivan
@timesgroup.com
TWEETS @sridharvMirror

The Karnataka State Administrative Tribunal (KAT) has halted the transfer of teachers by issuing a stay order. Due to the imposition of the Lok Sabha Election Code of Conduct, the transfer application process has been active, with applications accepted until May 15. Post this period, the education department had planned to conduct transfer counselling sessions. However, the transfer proceedings have been interrupted as KAT in Kalaburagi has imposed a stay order.

This development stems from some teachers' complaints filed with KAT, citing discrepancies in the weighting system. Following an investigation by KAT, the tribunal has temporarily halted teacher transfers until the matter is resolved. The issue at hand revolves around the criteria for weighing service tenure in the teacher transfer guidelines, specifically concerning Zones A, B, and C. These guidelines suggest that Field Education Officers should verify in the Teacher Mitra software whether teachers' service records in all locations within their group are accurately updated until the current date.

However, this approach has raised concerns among promoted teachers who are actively fulfilling their duties. They question whether they are eligible to apply for transfers during their tenure. Many teachers feel the current weighting system set by the education department is arbitrary and unscientific, leading to thousands being unfairly excluded from applying for transfers.

Yallappa Gowda, the state president of the Karnataka State Promotion Government High School Teachers Association, has expressed dissatisfaction with the current system, advocating for a revision that considers teachers' entire service history rather than just their present group.

Last year alone, around 30,000 teachers benefited from transfers, highlighting the significance of the transfer process for educators. The code of conduct is in place until the first week of June

Last year alone, around 30,000 teachers benefited from transfers, highlighting the significance of this process for educators. However, the ongoing disruption has stalled the creation of a seniority list and the release of the final transfer merit list by the education department. The department's prior issuance of guidelines based on the 2022 rule rather than formulating new rules for 2023 has added complexity to the situation. With the

code of conduct in place until the first week of June, it is unable to proceed with transfer counselling until the KAT's restraining order is resolved, leading to uncertainty and delays in the teacher transfer process.

2016 paper leak case: 17 acquitted

Meanwhile, the city's principal court has issued a verdict acquitting 17 individuals accused in the 2016 II PUC Chemistry question paper leak case, which had garnered national attention. The CID, assigned to probe the case initially filed at the Malleswaram police station, apprehended 18 individuals, including the mastermind, Sivakumariah, also known as Guruji.

SDA Santhosh, who was responsible for the leak from the Hanagal treasury in Haveri district, faced imprisonment. The seriousness of the case led the CID to invoke the Karnataka Control of Organised Crimes Act, 2000 (KCOCA) against the suspects. During the trial, the mastermind, who had been out on bail due to health reasons, passed away. The court acquitted Ranganath, Rudrappa, and Obalaraya due to a lack of evidence. However, the investigation continued against the remaining accused. The trial was completed, but the acquittal was made citing insufficient evidence, discrepancies, and other factors.

Electricity transition report rates BESCOM 43rd in country

Melvin Mathew
c-melvin.mathew
@timesgroup.com
TWEETS @BangaloreMirror

The Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA) and Ember's State Electricity Transition (SET) report recently conducted studies on states to understand the electricity transition. Bangalore Electricity Supply Company Limited (BESCOM), a prominent distribution company (DISCOM) in Karnataka responsible for nearly 47 per cent of total power purchases, received the second-lowest rating by the PFC of all DISCOMs in the state.

Under the 12th edition of the Integrated Rating of DISCOMs, BESCOM was ranked 43rd in the country, was downgraded to a C, and earned a rating score of 21.8. Previously, in the 11th edition, it was ranked 31st, got a B-grade, and earned a rating score of 40.2. In the 12th rating exercise, it was granted red card metrics given under the Auditor's Adverse Opinion.

The report also observed that BESCOM did not receive state government support for help in loss takeover in FY23 amounting to 1,700 crore. Furthermore, it got a score of 20.6 out of 75 under financial sustainability, 9.1 out of 13 under performance excellence, and 7 out of 12 under external environment. It also recorded 32,335 MUs of net input energy and 29365 MUs of net sold energy.

In a recent press statement,

the Union Minister for Power and New and Renewable Energy, RK Singh, observed that one of the reasons for the increase in power prices is that many DISCOMs have not tied up resources for long-term power supply, making them dependent on short-term power purchases, which are naturally higher than long-term prices. He also added that they are being encouraged to enter into long-term PPAs for

BESCOM was downgraded to C in the 12th edition of the Intergrated Rating of DISCOMs

at least 85 per cent of their electricity requirement.

The state only has about seven per cent (~1,592 MW) of its renewable energy installed capacity as distributed solar energy. Karnataka has also added significant renewable energy capacity, emerging as the fifth-largest contributor from 2020 to February 2024, representing about seven per cent (~3.4 GW) of the total renewable energy capacity addition (excluding large hydro) by 21 states. The state has also been making strides in the EV sector.

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28 AIR

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39 AIR

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40 AIR

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47 AIR

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62 AIR

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64 AIR

SRI SURYA VARMA DATLA
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66 AIR

YERUVA KETAN REDDY
App No. 240310229046

69 AIR

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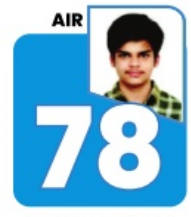

78 AIR

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20 lakes in Bengaluru to receive aeration systems

City's water bodies set for revival with submerged aeration tech, aimed at combatting algae growth

Bangalore Mirror Bureau
mybangaloremirror
@timesgroup.com

TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

Aeration systems will help oxygenate the lower depths of water columns

Up to 20 lakes in Bengaluru might soon receive advanced aeration systems to improve water quality. According to the Lake Department of Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), water bodies from different zones have been handpicked to install submerged diffused aeration systems that will help oxygenate the lower depths of the water columns. The idea is to improve overall water quality and thus prevent fish kills, reduce the growth of algae, and speed up the decomposition process of organic matter.

"Lakes from all BBMP zones, based on their water quality, have been picked for this project under the Green Bengaluru initiative. These are the lakes that are developed by BBMP with sufficient diversion drains and no sewage entry. We are also choosing those with good security systems to avoid theft. An action plan has been prepared and submitted for approval. Once we receive the nod from the commissioner, work will begin," said a senior official from the Lake Department.

Subject to approval, BBMP will soon call for tenders to install new aerators, each costing Rs 20 lakh. The total budget for the project is Rs 35 crores. Officials say these advanced aerators are expected to impede the growth of algae by creating a non-stagnant environment. The system leads to continuous vertical mixing of water, thus increasing dissolved oxygen levels even at the bottom of the water bodies and improving the natural decomposition of organic matter.

"There are two types of aeration systems. The basic model, the cascading aerator, takes up water from underneath the surface and pushes it up, which causes oxygen to mix. However, this increases dissolved oxygen only to a certain depth, unlike the submerged aeration system. The number of aerators per lake will depend on the size and overall water quality. We are also considering cascading aerators for smaller lakes and submerged models for big water bodies," informed the official.

Apart from aerators, the department will also create floating wetlands, bring in technologies such as Jal Dost, and build sluice gates and fencing wherever required.

"The basic model, the cascading aerator, takes up water from underneath the surface and pushes it up, which causes oxygen to mix. However, this increases dissolved oxygen only to a certain depth, unlike the submerged aeration system

– Official, BBMP Lakes Department

"We plan to build floating wetlands with Canna Indica plant variety in some lakes. Canna Indica is known for absorbing nutrients from water. We are hoping this will reduce the biological and chemical oxygen demand of these water bodies. We have submitted an action plan for the project. Since there is a code of conduct for one more month, we will call tenders in June. It will be wrapped up in one month since it is BBMP level.

However, city-based lake experts and activists say the fund would have been better spent if used for maintenance of existing infrastructure and technologies to improve lake water quality.

"While there is nothing wrong with spending money on ecological development and improvement of water quality, BBMP must focus on strengthening monitoring and maintenance of existing infrastructure to attain their goal of better water quality. Moreover, the focus should be more on prevention than rehabilitation. The water quality of lakes will automatically improve if measures are taken to ensure that Sewage Treatment Plants are functioning as desired, lake inlets are cleaned, diversion drains are unclogged, and sewage waste departments (SWDs) are maintained. Moreover, all these activities would take only a fraction of the amount they have earmarked for this new initiative. The Lake Department should coordinate with the SWD Department to ensure no nutrient enters lakes," said Raghavendra B Pachhapur, a city-based lake activist.

Borewell Road residents protest unfair water bills

Melvin Mathew
c-melvin.mathew
@timesgroup.com

TWEETS @BangaloreMirror

While parts of the city have been suffering from a water crisis, residents of Borewell Road have not been getting Cauvery water supply for the past two months due to pipeline damage. The residents allege that despite this, they have been issued water bills by the Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB). "How can a water bill be issued when there is no water supply?" ask many residents.

According to residents, the pipeline in the area was damaged due to BESCOM work and has not been rectified yet. "In February, the pipeline supplying Cauvery water was damaged, but we have been getting bills from BWSSB. The BESCOM work between Whitefield's main road to Nallurhalli damaged the pipeline. Initially, we started receiving polluted water, and then there was no water supply at all. BWSSB had promised to fix the pipeline. Furthermore, there is also a discrepancy between water (in litres) consumed according to the water metre and the water bill," said Sumanth, a resident. According to the bill issued to the resident in April, BWSSB issued a bill noting 26,000 litres of water consumption with a total of Rs 1,506, including Rs 1,006 for water charges.

"From February 2, we got two bills from BWSSB. The litres of water consumed have been arbitrarily added to the bills. Back when we were given proper water supply, we were using around 1.5 lakh litres per month; now we are being issued bills for 6,000 and 3,000 litres per month. Almost every apartment in the area has been issued such a bill. We worry about the fine and interest if the BWSSB officials do not accurately calculate the water supply and bill accordingly. Without Cauvery supply, we are dependent on water tankers costing Rs 2,500 per day," said another resident, adding that they have submitted a written complaint regarding the matter.

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Speed breakers needed

Yelachenahalli

At the metro station, people struggle to cross the busy road, especially during peak hours when traffic is heavy. There is an urgent need to install speed breakers on both sides to facilitate safe road crossing.

Tanker town

Kodihali

Water tankers have been blocking 80 feet Road, Kodihalli under Jeevanbhimanagar police station limits.

Junk junction

RMV Extension

This is the condition of the junction of the road at 2nd main, 1st cross, Venkatachari Nagar, Railway Colony, RMV second stage.

Where is demolition squad taking its waste?

C&D processing plants in Chikkajala & Kannur not getting as much waste as city's infra work calls for

Garima Prasher
garima.prasher
@timesgroup.com
TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

A business establishment in the Malleshwaram area recently closed its doors to the public, after which the building was demolished to make way for a new enterprise.

According to the Solid Waste Management Rule 2016 by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), the new enterprise was supposed to transport all Construction and Demolition (C&D) waste generated in the process to C&D processing plants in Chikkajala and Kannur.

However, the guidelines for C&D waste processing were ignored by the generator. Upon receiving this information, Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Limited (BSWML) sent three notices to the enterprise.

The final notice was issued on March 27, stating, "Upon several intimations through notices, no serious compliance was observed. Hence, it is being recommended to KSPCB for further necessary action in accordance with the provision of the Environment (Protection) Act 1986..."

The facility manager of C&D processing plants in Chikkajala and Kannur stated that no C&D waste was ever received from the project site. "Our records show no communication or inquiry from this business regarding C&D waste disposal.

We have not received their waste through any other channels too," said Rajesh Korah, co-owner of the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike's (BBMP) designated processing plants in Chikkajala and Kannur, with a capacity of 1750 MT/day.

Korah also mentioned that there has been no increase in the amount of C&D at his facilities despite many infrastructure projects being undertaken in Bengaluru. Between April 2023 and March 2024, Korah received 18,254 tons of C&D waste at the Chikkajala facility and 45,480 tons at the Kannur facility. "We had received a similar waste load in 2022-23 as well," he added.

These two plants are the designated sites for the disposal of C&D waste generated within the jurisdiction of BBMP, and waste generators are supposed to dispose of their waste at these facilities by furnishing a copy of the approved C&D waste management plan, followed by a notified service charge of Rs 134 per metric tonne.

Solid Waste Management experts say that despite the city's numerous ongoing infrastructure projects and other development activities, nearly 60,000 tonnes reaching processing units implies that a significant portion of this waste is being dumped illegally.

Just sending notices to defaulters does not seem to be helping the cause. It is time that all agencies join hands to curb this menace

"These projects are being executed by large infrastructure companies such as CPWD, BMRCL, and BIAL. Not just that, a lot of demolition has happened across technology parks in the city in recent times.

These activities are bound to generate a lot of C&D waste material. However, the amount that Rock Crystal is receiving only goes to show that none of the developers and contractors is handling their C&D waste responsibly," said a city-based SWM expert on the condition of anonymity.

They say it is ironic that C&D waste generators are not complying with rules despite multiple notices being sent by the civic agency. "Improper management and disposal of C&D is one of the main reasons behind the city flooding during monsoon.

Just sending notices to defaulters does not seem to be helping the cause. It is time that all agencies join hands to curb this menace. Vehicles carrying C&D waste should be seized by traffic police or police departments. Enforcement has to happen from every possible direction.

BBMP should form an exclusive team of marshals to track C&D waste and penalise the defaulters," the expert emphasised.

Violent street clash among auto drivers ignites outrage

Ahna Prakash
c-ahna.prakash
@timesgroup.com
TWEETS @BangaloreMIRROR

A video circulating on social media depicts two auto drivers assaulting another auto driver in broad daylight near Silk Board junction in Bengaluru.

The footage shows a man hitting a middle-aged auto driver and yelling at him while their autos are parked on the side.

After the video gained traction online, Bengaluru City Police stated that the matter falls under the jurisdiction of Mico Layout Police Station and they have been informed about it.

The BCP replied to the viral tweet, saying, "Noted, we have already informed to @micolayoutps for necessary action."

Alok Kumar, Additional Director General of Police, Traffic & Road Safety, also addressed the issue, tweeting, "Have informed the concerned though it's not directly related to traffic & road safety. Such behaviour should be dealt with sternly."

The incident has sparked outrage among netizens, who expressed concerns about the increasing "hooliganism" on Bengaluru roads.

One resident told BM, "There are instances when auto drivers get into fights with other drivers. But in general, I feel policemen aren't very firm against those picking up fights on the road or even when someone breaks rules endangering others."

Another netizen complained to the police on social media, saying, "It is not enough to detain them and later help them with bail. Please give them the treatment that UP police do. Take their videos and make their faces public. We citizens will be happy to see such thugs and rogues thrashed & bruised so that they don't dare to beat innocent people on the road."

Several residents noted that assault on the road had become a common occurrence in the city, emphasising the need for law and order police to be more vigilant.

"Unfortunately, hooliganism and rowdyism have increased manifold in the city. The way auto drivers assault their colleagues is pitiable. These guys are emboldened by the fact that they know that the City Police will not act against them," expressed another netizen.

ಉದ್ಯೋಗಾವಕಾಶ
ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆ ಹಾಗೂ ಫಿಕ್ಸೆಡ್ ಟರ್ಮ್ ಎಂಪ್ಲಾಯ್ಮೆಂಟ್ (FTE) ಆಧಾರದ ಮೇಲೆ ನೇಮಕಾತಿ
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ಸಂದರ್ಶನ ದಿನಾಂಕ : 02.05.2024 ರಿಂದ 18.05.2024 ರವರೆಗೆ.
ವಿಳಾಸ: 109-142, ಕೆಐಎಡಿಬಿ, ನರಸಾಪುರ ಇಂಡಸ್ಟ್ರಿಯಲ್ ಏರಿಯಾ, ಕರಿನಾಯಕನಹಳ್ಳಿ ಗ್ರಾಮ, ಕಸಬಾ ಹೋಬಳಿ, ಮಾಲೂರು ತಾಲೂಕು, ಕೋಲಾರ, ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ - 563130
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PICS: KAUSHIK JN

Safe transfer

The EVM machines are being shifted from polling booths on Saturday after the voting concluded for the second phase of Lok Sabha elections on Friday in Bengaluru.

Ballot blues: Voter discrepancies, long weekends to be blamed

Voting turnout still low in city despite leaves granted, freebies and more

Sridhar.Vivan
@timesgroup.com

TWEETS @sridharvMIRROR

Voters awaiting their turn outside a polling booth on Friday

A day after the polls, the debate is still on as to what can be done to improve the poll percentage in Bengaluru. Officials believed that many people might not show up to vote over the weekend, so the Election Commission (EC) decided to hold polling on a Friday and asked the companies to grant leave or permission for employees to vote. Despite this, the turnout was still very low.

According to the latest information released by the EC, the total voter turnout in Karnataka stood at 69.56 per cent. Specifically, Bengaluru North recorded 54.45 per cent, South 54.06 per cent, Central 53.17 per cent, and Rural 68.30 per cent. However, apart from these areas in Bengaluru, all other constituencies that underwent voting witnessed a turnout exceeding 70 percent.

Rajajinagar MLA and former minister S Suresh Kumar said, "I had made repeated appeals to the EC, urging them to schedule elections on weekdays other than Friday, Saturday, Sunday, or Monday. When polling days coincide with Fridays and the following day is declared a holiday, it often turns into an extended weekend for many, leading them to prioritise leisure over voting. For example, in certain polling stations, like ward office polling station No. 99 in Kamakshipalya Ward of Rajajinagar Constituency, the voter count stands at 1,424. Due to the sluggish voting process at such locations, some voters opt to leave upon seeing the long lines. Setting up additional sub-centres in such areas would have been a more efficient approach."

While nearly half of the voters in Bengaluru didn't turn up to vote, Mandya had as high as 81.67 per cent of voter turnout. Analysing the trend, Rajkumar Dugar, the founder of Citizens for Citizens, said that apart from apathy, a sentiment of "why bother when my vote won't change the outcome" is prevalent among people. "Moreover, we have a significant number of individuals who have relocated here in the past few decades, and their emotional connection to Bengaluru is still fragile. The scorching hot weather has prompted many to leave the city for cooler destinations during long weekends, particularly when elections fall on Fridays. Without the special awareness campaigns targeting the generally educated populace in the city and the incentives offered by restaurants, ride-sharing services, and others with freebies for voters, the turnout might have been even lower," he said.

Dugar added that the political leaders, especially in Bengaluru, have failed to meet the expectations of their constituents with their lacklustre performances in recent times. Considering all the genuine factors, a healthy voter turnout should ideally reach at least 67 per cent.

However, many point out the voter list discrepancies as a major reason for the low voter turnout. "Within our constituency, our team faced challenges in delivering booth lists to approximately 50 thousand voters. This was partly due to outdated voter lists that still included the names of individuals who had either passed away or relocated years ago. Despite our best efforts, reaching these individuals proved nearly impossible. Until a thorough clean-up of our voter lists is done, the issue of "low turnout" will persist as a constant concern. One notable incident involved a voter who, upon being contacted and encouraged to vote in our constituency, revealed that his name appeared in three different constituencies. He then expressed a preference for a candidate from Bengaluru Rural Constituency. Such discrepancies undoubtedly impact the overall voting percentage," added Kumar.

POLL BYTES

Poll void: Repoll at booth 146 in Chamarajanagar

The Election Commission has directed to conduct a repoll in one polling station in the Chamarajanagar Lok Sabha constituency on April 29. The vandalisation of polling booth 146 in Indiganatta village of Chamarajanagar LS constituency by the villagers who had boycotted voting called for repolls.

The EC declared the poll conducted on Friday at polling station 146 as "void." In an order issued on Saturday, it stated, "On the basis of reports submitted by the Returning Officer and General Observer for 22-Chamarajanagar Parliamentary Constituency and after taking all material circumstances into account, the Commission hereby declares under Sections 58 (2) and 58 A (2) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 that the poll taken on Friday at polling booth 146, Govt Lower Primary School, Indiganatha, 221-Hanur Assembly Constituency of 21-Chamarajanagar Parliamentary Constituency, falling under Chamarajanagar District, to be void, and appoints April 29, 7 am to 6 pm for taking a fresh poll at the said polling station in accordance with the Commission's instructions."

The polling in the second phase of the parliamentary elections simultaneously across 88 constituencies recorded an approximate voter turnout of 60.96 per cent as of 7 pm on Friday, according to the EC. With the conclusion of phase 2, voting has been completed in 14 states and UTs. The third phase is scheduled for May 7, which will witness polling in 94 constituencies across 12 states/UTs. The results will be announced on June 4. -ANI

'Patients' voted

While numerous physically fit individuals abstained from voting, there were instances of patients making their way to the polling booth. 39-year-old HN Muralidhar, who was slated for a minimally invasive surgical procedure on Friday noon, went to cast his vote before the operation. Conversely, Madhan (25), who had been involved in a road traffic accident resulting in a heel bone fracture, multiple cuts, a forehead laceration, a minor brain bleed (subarachnoid haemorrhage), and a lung infection (pneumonia), also participated in the voting process.

Muralidhar

Madhan

Karthik Rajagopal, COO at Manipal Hospitals, said, "Following a thorough health assessment and clearance from their attending physicians at Manipal Hospitals, the patients were transported to the polling stations in vehicles designated by the hospital. I express my gratitude to ECI and the BBMP for their support in facilitating their participation in the electoral process."

VK Money: Unveiling the first vernacular business paper in South India

PICS: SRIDHAR KS

VK Money's logo was launched in the presence of Prashanth Prakash, Mohandas Pai, Anil Shetty; VK editor Sudarshan Channagihalli and VK & BM CEO Deepak Saluja

Introducing VK Money, a groundbreaking addition to the realm of business journalism. While numerous English newspapers cover business news, the landscape lacks dedicated vernacular papers. Enter Vijay Karnataka, a powerhouse in Kannada media and part of the esteemed Times of India group. With VK Money, VK is not just launching a newspaper; but igniting a revolution in business reporting.

VK's Editor Sudarshan Channagihalli said, "As a leader in both the newspaper industry and innovation, VK understands the pulse of its readership. The growing interest in business topics among our audience has driven the concept to create VK Money, a paper that promises comprehensive coverage and top-notch business journalism. VK Money is not just a newspaper; it's a game-changer in the business journalism landscape." He emphasized the necessity of a business newspaper. "As VK celebrates its 25th anniversary, we're presenting a special gift to mark this milestone. This initiative is the brainchild of our CEO Deepak Saluja, and we're committed to turning his vision into reality. After extensive research spanning six to seven months, we're proud to unveil our inaugural special edition."

Deepak Saluja, the CEO of Vijay Karnataka and Bangalore Mirror newspapers, emphasized, "VK operates across 23 offices and 37 hyper locations, reaching every hobli level to cover news comprehensively. VK stands as a robust media house. Recognizing a market demand for business-oriented publications, we engaged with readers and industry leaders. What became evident is the significant wealth generation in Karnataka, with its GDP rising to fifth position from ninth. The state boasts highly employable talent across its numerous colleges and universities, leading to minimal unemployment rates. Amidst the digital surge, there's a saturation of information, often lacking credibility. VK aims to bring clarity by providing trustworthy news, insightful analytics, and perspectives through VK Money. The name 'Money' resonates universally, reflecting our commitment to delivering impactful financial journalism."

Prashanth Prakash, Chair of the Vision Group on Start-Ups for the Government of Karnataka, highlighted, "Start-ups are not limited to Bengaluru alone. Clusters across the state have seen the emergence of 500 to 1,000 start-ups. Many of these local start-ups do not receive coverage in English newspapers. VK Money's presence is crucial in this context. It is not just about Bengaluru; it's about propelling the next level of start-up creation across Karnataka. Our state is a leader in the start-up ecosystem, and this leadership should extend beyond Bengaluru. We aspire to become the start-up capital of Asia, and VK Money will play a vital role in realizing this vision."

Mohandas Pai, Padma Shri Awardee and Chairman of Aarin Capital, shared his excitement about the launch of VK Money. He emphasized the need for informed decision-making as Karnataka aims to become a 1 trillion dollar economy within the larger goal of India's 5 trillion dollar economy. He highlighted the crucial role of education in preparing students for diverse job opportunities and praised VK Money for its potential to provide valuable insights and empower readers with essential knowledge. Pai stressed that access to reliable data is key to making informed decisions and expressed confidence that VK Money will play a significant role in educating and empowering individuals across the state.

Anil Shetty, a young entrepreneur and advisor to numerous start-ups, highlighted the significance of VK as an unbiased newspaper, emphasising its accessibility and credibility. Shetty expressed optimism about the success of VK Money, anticipating its popularity not only in Bengaluru but also across other regions of the state.

Not enough, but thank you

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Saturday said the Centre has approved Rs 3,499 crore as drought relief and released only Rs 3,454 crore and urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to give the balance amount as soon as possible. The chief minister thanked the Supreme Court for warning the Central government and providing some drought relief to the state.

"According to the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) rules, the state was supposed to be paid Rs 18,171 crore, but the Central government has only approved Rs 3,498.98 crore. This money is not sufficient for the drought relief. Our fight for the arrears will continue," he told reporters here.The chief minister said that the union government did not give the drought relief fund out of concern for Karnataka but it was forced to release money after the state government approached the Supreme Court and pleaded about the drought situation. "The Supreme Court, which heard this petition, was convinced that the Centre was doing injustice to Karnataka due to political reasons," Siddaramaiah alleged.

During the hearing, the Centre promised to the Supreme Court that the drought relief would be given within a week. "This relief money has been given out of unwillingness to fulfill the promise made to the apex court," he added. He said, neither the BJP leaders nor the Central government have any role in this. This is the result of the Supreme Court's concerns for the agriculture sector. **PTI**

Women in K'taka are well insured

In state, women own 44.23% of total insurance premiums

Sridhar.Vivan@timesgroup.com

TWEETS @sridharvMIRROR

Women from the state are at number one spot when it comes to buying an insurance premium. A recent report highlights that women in Karnataka own a significant portion of insurance premiums, accounting for 44.23% of the total premiums. This statistic positions Karnataka at the forefront among all states in India.

Notably, this percentage surpasses other states such as Kerala, Mizoram, Sikkim, and Meghalaya, indicating a robust engagement of women in securing insurance coverage. The report said that women's increasing ownership of insurance premiums reflects their substantial role in the economic landscape of the country. With nearly half of India's population being women, their participation in economic activities is not only significant but also vital for overall economic growth.

The rising trend of women purchasing insurance premiums not only speaks to their financial awareness but also underscores their empowerment in making informed decisions regarding financial security and risk management. The report said, "Recognising the evolving needs and preferences of women, life insurers are proactively tailoring their insurance products to cater specifically to this demographic. These products are designed to provide comprehensive coverage that aligns with the diverse lifestyles, responsibilities, and financial goals of women. By offering suitable insurance solutions, insurers aim to ensure that women receive adequate coverage for various life contingencies, thereby enhancing their financial resilience."

2nd in health insurance

In addition to general insurance premiums, Karnataka also holds a second position in health insurance premiums within the country. According to the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDA) annual report, Karnataka ranks second in terms of health insurance premium payments. In the fiscal year 2022-23, Karnataka contributed 11% of the total health insurance premiums paid across India. This places Karnataka just behind Maharashtra, which accounted for 29.5% of health insurance premiums. The state's strong position in health insurance premiums reflects a growing awareness and prioritization of health protection among its residents. The report further delves into the trends observed in health insurance claims and payments. It notes that the net incurred claims under the health insurance business witnessed a modest increase of about 2% in the fiscal year 2022-23, amounting to 64,631 crores. This increase in claims underscores the importance of health insurance in mitigating healthcare-related financial risks and providing financial support during medical emergencies.

India's potential

The report said, "India's insurance market is poised for significant growth, driven by various factors such as robust economic development, increasing disposable incomes, a young and dynamic population, heightened risk awareness, digital advancements, and progressive regulatory frameworks. The report projects that India's insurance market could ascend to become the sixth-largest globally by the year 2032, reflecting its immense growth potential and attractiveness to investors and insurers alike. The increasing participation of women in insurance ownership, Karnataka's notable position in health insurance premiums, and the overall growth trajectory of India's insurance market ndicate a positive and promising outlook for the insurance sector, contributing to financial inclusion."

> **"Recognising the evolving needs and preferences of women, life insurers are proactively tailoring their insurance products to cater to this demographic** –The report

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BENGALURU SPEAKS

and gets heard on this page

STORYBEHINDTHEPHOTO

SPARROW SIGHTING

A chipping sparrow on its low perch, a rare sight in Bangalore.

The picture was clicked by reader **A Aruna**

If you have a picture and a story to share, send us the picture with your name and number at **mybangaloremirror@timesgroup.com**

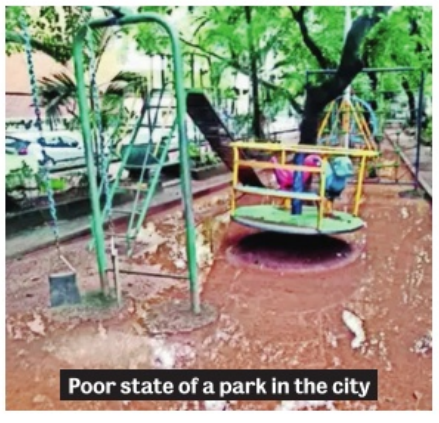
Poor park maintenance plagues parts of city

Lack of maintenance turns green spaces into dumping grounds

| Sridhar Vivan
sridhar.vivan@timesgroup.com
TWEETS @sridharvMirror

Bengaluru boasts numerous parks, but only a handful are well-maintained. For instance, Kundalamma playground, also known as Kundalammana Gudi or Mallathalli Park within the NGF layout in Rajarajeshwari Division, has deteriorated into a disorderly area marked by deceased animals.

BM reader S Sivaprasad expressed concern, stating, "This park's dismal state has become a significant concern for early morning visitors from neighbouring areas. The park's dilapidation has frustrated its users, who place blame on municipal authorities. The resting stone platforms are shattered, electric lamps have remained non-functional for years, and the park is overrun with plastic waste and debris, as sanitation workers avoid entering. Recently, dead puppies and cats have been found scattered within, emitting a foul odour and posing environmental and health risks. This deterioration has notably reduced the influx of visitors, including air travellers. Despite numerous complaints from park-goers to officials and lawmakers, little improvement has been seen, leaving the park in dire need of environmental cleanup by the Health Department's personnel."



Poor state of a park in the city

Residents lament the decline in park upkeep, attributing it to the negligent attitude of municipal officials. Despite substantial investments from taxpayers' money, these parks have transformed into unkempt forests and dumping grounds, losing their allure and appeal. Despite announcements by the BBMP Chief Commissioner Tushar Giri Nath in the past to create more parks at considerable costs, the public remains sceptical about the actual improvement in green spaces. The corporation's track record of failing to maintain existing parks raises doubts about its ability to manage new hi-tech parks.

Ranjeeth P, a resident, emphasised the importance of parks for community well-being, stating, "Parks are essential for the physical and mental well-being of our communities. They provide a natural environment for recreation, exercise, and relaxation, which are crucial for maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Regular maintenance of parks ensures that these spaces remain accessible, safe, and inviting for people of all ages to enjoy outdoor activities and connect with nature."

Devendrappa K, a senior citizen, added, "Maintaining parks is not just about preserving green spaces; it's about preserving our heritage and culture. Parks often hold historical significance and are part of our collective memories. Proper upkeep of these spaces preserves their historical features, such as monuments, sculptures, and landscaping, allowing future generations to appreciate and learn from our past. Neglecting park maintenance risks losing these cultural assets and deprives communities of valuable educational and recreational resources. Regular maintenance activities, such as landscaping, cleaning, and infrastructure upkeep, enhance the aesthetics and functionality of parks, making them more attractive and enjoyable for residents and visitors alike."

DID YOU KNOW?

In India, the iconic inked finger symbolises voting in elections, with Mysore Paints and Varnish Limited supplying the indelible ink since the 1960s. The Election Commission's order of over 26 lakh vials for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections reflects the scale of this tradition, serving nearly 97 crore eligible voters. Each 10mg vial can mark up to 700 voters, with a total requirement of nearly 30 lakh vials costing Rs 55 crore. Additionally, there's international demand for the ink, showcasing its significance beyond India's borders.

GET HEARD WITH MIRROR

9591233247

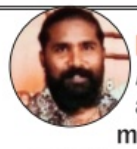
Let's see how much you know about Namma Bengaluru, folks. Tell us something incredible and mind-boggling about this beautiful city and our editors and researchers will check it out. If it's credible, we'll give it a shout-out, with your name and picture.

TAPTHECHATTER

where Bengalureans speak their mind

Are there specific neighbourhoods or areas in Bengaluru that you believe define its uniqueness and excellence?

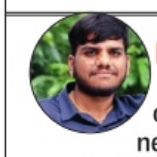
Hemanth, BM Reader
Some of the places that define Bangalore's uniqueness and excellence include Malleshwaram with its old-world charm, Indiranagar with its vibrant nightlife and Koramangala with its thriving startup ecosystem.



Lokesh, BM Reader
Areas like Shivaji Nagar and Hebbal are neighbourhoods which still maintain a traditional lifestyle despite the city's reputation for modern trends and recent developments.

Mariya Tejaswini, BM Reader
Electronic City, often referred to as 'E-City,' stands as a major technology hub in India. Home to numerous industries, particularly in the electronics and IT sectors, it hosts tech giants like Infosys, Wipro, and Tech Mahindra, shaping it into a vibrant and dynamic neighbourhood.

Rohit, BM Reader
Unique neighbourhoods like Indiranagar and Koramangala celebrated for their distinct charm, amenities, and vibrant social scenes, contribute significantly to Bangalore's reputation for excellence and diversity.



Lakshman, BM Reader
These are just a few examples of the many distinctive neighbourhoods in Bangalore, each with its unique character and charm. Exploring them offers a glimpse into the city's vibrant culture and rich history.

Lakshmi Narayan, BM Reader
Whitefield sees heavy traffic daily, but fret not, as public transport is easily accessible, saving you some extra bucks. Additionally, it boasts numerous independent boutiques, shops, IT companies, malls, and restaurants, including the Phoenix Marketcity.

SPEAK TO US

Which roads do you think are the worst roads in Bengaluru and why?

If you want to be featured in this section, mail us your answer to this question, in 25 words, with 'Tap The Chatter' in the subject line. Mail us with your name, occupation & a picture at mybangaloremirror@timesgroup.com or WhatsApp us on 9591233247

HEALTH TIP: Cashews are a good source of healthy fats, protein, and minerals such as magnesium and zinc

Swap out fast vehicles for a classic bicycle or walking to get around

OUT OF SIGHT

Nearsightedness is at epidemic levels – and the problem begins in childhood

Myopia, or the need for corrected vision to focus or see objects at a distance, has become a lot more common in recent decades. Some even consider myopia, also known as nearsightedness, an epidemic.

Optometry researchers estimate that about half of the global population will need corrective lenses to offset myopia by 2050 if current rates continue – up from 23% in 2000 and less than 10% in some countries.

The associated health care costs are huge. In the United States alone, spending on corrective lenses, eye tests and related expenses may be as high as US$7.2 billion a year.

What explains the rapid growth in myopia?

I'm a vision scientist who has studied visual perception and perceptual defects. To answer that question, first let's examine what causes myopia – and what reduces it.

How myopia develops

While having two myopic parents does mean you're more likely to be nearsighted, there's no single myopia gene. That means the causes of myopia are more behavioral than genetic.

Optometrists have learned a great deal about the progression of myopia by studying visual development in infant chickens. They do so by putting little helmets on baby chickens. Lenses on the face of the helmet cover the chicks' eyes and are adjusted to affect how much they see.

Just like in humans, if visual input is distorted, a chick's eyes grow too large, resulting in myopia. And it's progressive. Blur leads to eye growth, which causes more blur, which makes the eye grow even larger, and so on.

Two recent studies featuring extensive surveys of children and their parents provide strong support for the idea that an important driver of the uptick in myopia is that people are spending more time focusing on objects immediately in front of our eyes, whether a screen, a book or a drawing pad. The more time we spend focusing on something within arm's length of our faces, dubbed "near work," the greater the odds of having myopia.

So as much as people might blame new technologies like smartphones and too much "screen time" for hurting our eyes, the truth is even activities as valuable as reading a good book can affect your eyesight.

> **"As much as people might blame new tech for hurting our eyes, the truth is even activities as valuable as reading a good book can affect your eyesight**

Outside light keeps myopia at bay

Other research has shown that this unnatural eye growth can be interrupted by sunlight.

A 2022 study, for example, found that myopia rates were more than four times greater for children who didn't spend much time outdoors – say, once or twice a week – compared with those who were outside daily. At the same time, kids who spent more than three hours a day while not at school reading or looking at a screen close-up were four times more likely to have myopia than those who spent an hour or less doing so.

In another paper, from 2012, researchers conducted a meta-analysis of seven studies that compared duration of time spent outdoors with myopia incidence. They also found that more time spent outdoors was associated with lower myopia incidence and progression. The odds of developing myopia dropped by 2% for each hour spent outside per week.

Other researchers have reported similar effects and argued for much more time outdoors and changes in early-age schooling to reduce myopia prevalence.

What's driving the epidemic

That still doesn't explain why it's on the rise so rapidly.

Globally, a big part of this is due to the rapid development and industrialization of countries in East Asia over the last 50 years. Around that time, young people began spending more time in classrooms reading and focusing on other objects very close to their eyes and less time outdoors.

This is also what researchers observed in the North American Arctic after World War II, when schooling was mandated for Indigenous people. Myopia rates for Inuit went from the single digits before the 1950s to upwards of 70% by the 1970s as all children began attending schools for the first time.

Countries in Western Europe, North America and Australia have shown increased rates of myopia in recent years but nothing approaching what has been observed recently in China, Japan, Singapore and a few other East Asian countries. The two main factors identified as leading to increased myopia are increased reading and other activities that require focusing on an object close to one's eyes and a reduction in time spent outdoors.

The surge in myopia cases will likely have its worst effects 40 or 50 years from now because it takes time for the young people being diagnosed with nearsightedness now to experience the most severe vision problems.

Treating myopia

Fortunately, just a few minutes a day with glasses or contact lenses that correct for blur stops the progression of myopia, which is why early vision testing and vision correction are important to limit the development of myopia. Eye checks for children are mandatory in some countries, such as the U.K. and now China, as well as most U.S. states.

People with high myopia, however, have increased risk of blindness and other severe eye problems, such as retinal detachment, in which the retina pulls away from the back of the eye. The chances of myopia-related macular degeneration increase by 40% for each diopter of myopia. A diopter is a unit of measurement used in eye prescriptions.

But there appear to be two surefire ways to offset or delay these effects: Spend less time focusing on objects close to your face, like books and smartphones, and spend more time outside in the bright, natural light. Given the first one is difficult advice to take in our modern age, the next best thing is taking frequent breaks – or perhaps spend more time reading and scrolling outside in the sun.

(By Andrew Herbert, Rochester Institute of Technology, The Conversation)

All you need to know about...

How to fix facial bloating

Avoid late-night snacks
If you have an important event the next morning, it'd be best to avoid refined and processed carbs, processed foods, and dairy the night before.

Work it out
Swelling may occur if your body retains too much sodium and water. One of the easiest ways to get rid of excess sodium is by sweating it out. Try hitting the gym or going for a brisk 40-minute walk.

Sleep well
Sleep deprivation causes inflammation which results in swelling. Ensure you get at least 8 hours of sound sleep.

Drink water
Your face holds onto water as a response to the dehydrating effects. Drinking adequate water throughout the day will help the cells release the stored-up water and combat puffiness.

Gua Sha stone and facial exercises
A trick we swear by is using the gua sha stone as it boosts circulation, helps with lymphatic drainage, and gives you a chiseled look, almost instantly. Make sure to use a facial serum for the stone to glide on comfortably and of course, it's recommended to practice it every day! Additionally, incorporating facial exercises into your routines will also help strengthen muscles, which in turn will make your face look toned and leaner.

Cold treatment
By now, you must have come across videos of celebs on the 'Gram dunking their face in a bowl of ice water. Well, it's nothing but to help with a puffy face! Applying a cold compress on your face or opting for an ice water bowl instantly constricts blood vessels and reduces swelling instantly.

–Ravina Sachdev, Femina

real estate

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Space enthusiasts want to know it all at ISRO ask-me-anything

When Indian Space Research Organisation chairman S Somanath threw the floor open for questions over Instagram on Saturday, not only did people want to know about next Chandrayaan, asteroid missions and space stations, but also if ISRO can find water and if ISRO can teach 10-year-olds to build nano satellite. But with only an hour earmarked for #asksomanathisro, Somanath could only answer a fraction of the questions posted by aspiring scientists and space enthusiasts. Questions on water on the moon and nano-satellite classes for 10-year-olds have to wait till next session.

The session on April 27, between 6pm and 7pm, was attended by nearly 1,500 people.

Somnath chose questions aimed to encourage students and enthusiasts to pursue careers in science and technology, even geology, emphasising that ISRO offers diverse opportunities beyond just astronaut roles.

Answering a question on whether it would be possible for humans to build a fully sustainable space colony, ISRO chief said it is not likely in the near future.

"There are huge technical challenges to create a planet like earth elsewhere. It also requires huge investment, so in the immediate future I don't see it happening," said Somanath.

Somanath also talked about how ISRO is actively working on sample return missions, where spacecraft collect samples from celestial bodies (such as the Moon or asteroids) and bring them to Earth for analysis.

Answering a question which wondered whether ISRO's collaboration with NASA to jointly build a satellite equipped with advanced features such as large reflectors and high antennas for clear data transmission for US$ 1 billion is expensive, Somanath said considering what the ISRO is getting in return, the cost is justified.

He also explained about nano satellites and how it is now possible to make satellites weighing less than 1 kilogram that are as efficient as 100-kilogram satellites. He also answered questions about exoplanets, space junk and Chandrayaan 4.

Earlier on March 2, Somanath had interacted via Instagram answering select questions from the audience focusing on providing insights and guidance.

His engagement through Instagram allows direct interaction with space enthusiasts as well as creating awareness about ISRO's work. The next Instagram session will be in May for which the date and time will be announced soon, he said. **PTI**

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I Roshini Gilbert D/o John Ronald Goveas R/o Bren Imperia Wing 4,flat 1303,shub Enclave,harlur Road,varthur Hobli,sarjapur,hsr Layout Post,bengaluru 560102 Have Changed My Name To Roshini Goveas for all purposes.

I Rashmi Anil Kumar D/o Narasimhaiah B C R/o No 18 Khushi 6th Cross Puttaiah Compound Ashwathnagar Bangalore 560094 have changed my name to Rashmi B N for all purpose

I, Arjun Indavara Nagaraj S/o Seetharam Indavara Nagaraj R/o #525, 12th Main Rd, Delmia Circle, Jp Nagar, 5th Phase, B'lore- 560078 have changed my name to Arjun Indavara Seetharam for all purposes

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Sounds like a good plan

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

their storage capacity. Whenever there is rain in excess, these communities have no other option but to let the water go to waste.

So far we have approached 74 communities and citizen groups managing waterbodies in the city. Over the next two months, we plan to build a system around 16 lakes to ensure excess community-harvested rainwater fills up their neighbouring lakes," said Manohar.

BWSSB is also planning to organise a workshop on the modalities for communities and lake caretakers soon.

"We will have a session with these communities once the general election is over. This will ensure we are on the same page," added Manohar.

Sowl Kere in Kaikondrahalli is one of the 16 lakes under the pilot.

BWSSB has contacted representatives of Mahadevpura Parisara Samrakshane Mattu Abhivrudhi Samiti (MPSMAS) which manages the lake along with Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP).

At Sowl Kere, excess rainwater harvested by a nearby tech park will recharge the groundwater table. Based on rough calculations, while the tech park has a storage capacity of 1.5 lakh litres of rainwater, on a good rainy day, it gets nearly 6 lakh litres of water.

A representative of the Samiti told BM: "The tech park already has a dedicated pipeline for rainwater that joins SWD just before the drain enters the lake. BWSSB has proposed to sever the pipeline connection with SWD, so water enters the lake."

However, citizens managing these waterbodies with BBMP said any such inlet to the lakes should pass through a stabilisation pond or a wetland to check pollutants.

"BWSSB contacted us for the project; we have raised our concerns. Before the community-harvested rainwater enters our lake, it should pass through a stabilisation pond and wetland to ensure water quality is not compromised. We are also concerned about lake bund erosion," said a citizen group representative.

According to city-based lake experts, while the initiative is welcome, it should be executed and managed carefully to ensure the water quality of these lakes is not compromised.

"This was the original idea of stormwater drains. However, SWDs, over time, have become sewage drains, impacting lakes' water quality.

While BWSSB's initiative is good, it has to be done carefully to ensure the water entering lakes is of good quality. Every lake fed with excess community-harvested rainwater should be safeguarded by ensuring accountability," said V Ram Prasad, founder, Friends of Lakes.

"The rainwater allowed in the lakes will be filtered; we will ensure silt doesn't enter the waterbodies," Manohar told BM.

6,600 trees marked for Metro

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Soladevanahalli (22 trees) as per the plan. Officials mentioned that most trees fall under the jurisdiction of the south western railways, with some on private land, and in the ambit of BBMP, and other government agencies.

The commencement of the construction process for Bengaluru's suburban network has sparked environmental concerns as approximately 32,572 trees have been identified for chopping.

This move, while aimed at enhancing mass transport and reducing individual vehicle dependency, has raised alarms among environmental activists and experts.

An environmentalist said: "While we understand the importance of public transport infrastructure, it's crucial to balance progress with environmental conservation. The sheer number of trees slated for removal raises serious questions about the impact on our ecosystem. Trees play a vital role in maintaining ecological balance, providing oxygen, and combating pollution. Any large-scale removal must be accompanied by robust measures for tree conservation and afforestation."

Authorities responsible for the project highlighted the necessity of infrastructure development for the city's growing needs.

An official said, the suburban network is crucial for enhancing connectivity and easing traffic congestion: "However, we are mindful of environmental concerns and are implementing measures to mitigate the impact. One such measure involves planting compensatory saplings.

As per regulations, for every tree removed, 10 additional trees will be planted. K-Ride, in collaboration with the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), will allocate funds for the planting of compensatory saplings. We understand the importance of ecological balance. Our partnership with BBMP ensures that tree conservation remains a priority throughout the project."

Meanwhile, local residents and environmental activists urged authorities to ensure transparency and adherence to environmental regulations during the execution of the suburban rail project.

"Public engagement and regular updates on tree conservation efforts are crucial, We hope to see robust monitoring mechanisms in place to safeguard green cover. Looking ahead, we stress the importance of continuous dialogue between authorities, environmentalists, and the community to address concerns effectively.

Sustainable urban development requires collaborative efforts. Balancing infrastructure needs with environmental preservation is key to building a resilient and eco-friendly city," said Nagaraju Gowtham, a green activist.

Leading IT firms in India lost close to 70K employees in last fiscal year

Amid the muted revenue growth in the Indian IT services sector due to global macroeconomic headwinds, leading IT companies saw a drop of nearly 70,000 employees in the last fiscal year (FY24).

Infosys, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Wipro and Tech Mahindra, among others, lost maximum employees in FY24.

While Infosys saw its employee headcount drop by 25,994, the headcount at TCS went down by 13,249, in FY24.

IT bellwether Wipro saw its employee strength fall by 6,180 in the fourth quarter (Q4) of FY24.

When it comes to the full year, the IT services major witnessed its headcount decline by 24,516.

As revenue growth remained subdued, IT service companies pulled back on the addition of fresh talent, resulting in headcount reductions by 4% in December 2023

Tech Mahindra had a total headcount of 145,455 in FY24, down 795 (on-quarter) and 6,945 (full year).

Among the leading IT services companies, HCLTech was an exception which had a total headcount of 227,481 in the last fiscal year, with a net addition of 1,537 employees.

According to a latest Crisil Ratings report, the IT services sector in the country is likely to see a second successive year of muted revenue growth, at 5-7 per cent in FY25.

As revenue growth remained subdued, IT service companies pulled back on the addition of fresh talent, resulting in headcount reductions by 4 per cent (on-year) in December 2023.

Aditya Jhaver, Director, CRISIL Ratings, said that the slowdown in technology spending will continue this fiscal year, weighing on the revenue growth of IT service providers.

"Revenue from BFSI and retail segments will continue to be a drag with subdued growth of 4-5 per cent while manufacturing and healthcare will grow at a healthy 9-10 per cent," he noted. **IANS**

'A lot has changed, from tech to my hair'

On completing 20 years at the company, Alphabet and Google Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Sundar Pichai said that a lot has changed since then such as the technology, the number of people using their products, and his hair.

Pichai, who joined the tech giant in 2004 as a product manager, took to Instagram to share a small, heartwarming note on completing two decades in the company.

"April 26, 2004, was my first day at Google. A lot has changed since then - technology, the number of people who use our products... my hair," he wrote.

However, he mentioned that what hasn't changed for him is the "thrill I get from working at this amazing company".

"20 years in, I'm still feeling lucky," Pichai said. His post drew a lot of comments from users, congratulating him for completing 20 years at Google.

"Two decades of dedication, twenty years of triumphs, and a legacy of excellence," a user wrote.

"I cannot decide which achievement is greater, 20 years in all the technological improvements you've brought or the fact that you haven't gone bald after 20 years in tech," wrote another jokingly.

At Google, Pichai managed product management and innovation aspects for several products such as Chrome and Chrome OS. He also played an important part in the development of Google Drive.

In August 2015, he was appointed the CEO of Google, and in 2019, he took charge as the CEO of Alphabet, the tech giant's parent company. **–IANS**

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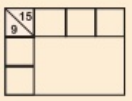
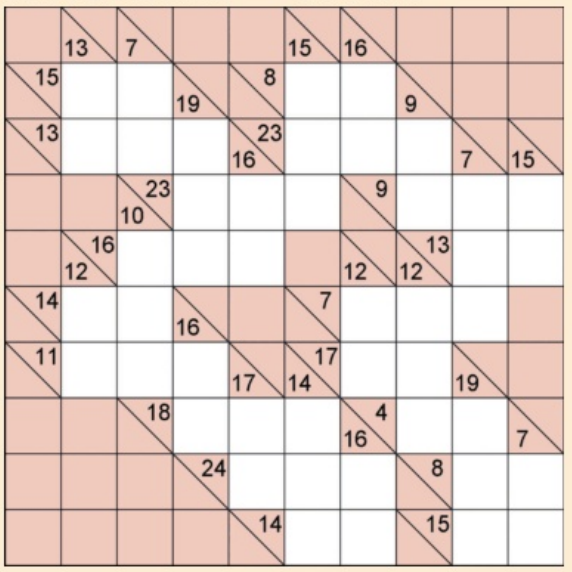
Kakuro

The numbers in the grey squares refer to the sums of the digits that you must fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the grey square containing the number. For instance, in the given example, the 3 boxes horizontally next to 15 must contain 3 digits that add up to 15, whereas

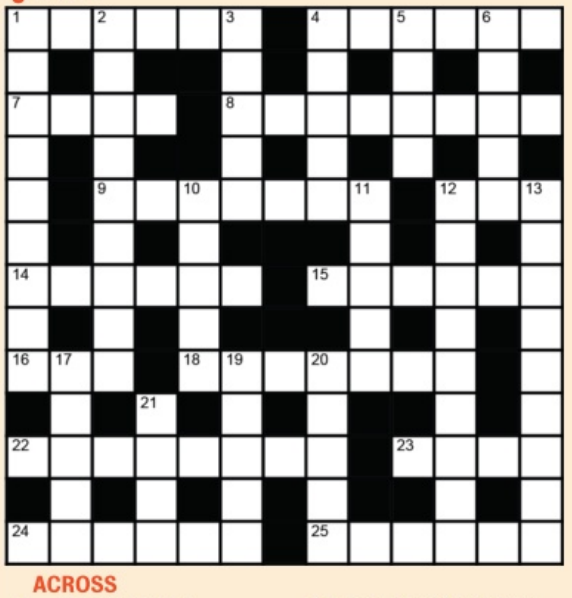


for 9, it is the 2 boxes placed vertically under it that must add up to 9. No zeros are used here, only the digits 1 through 9.

Note: A digit cannot appear more than once in any particular digit combination. For instance, in the example, we cannot have the combination of 4+7+4 for 15.



Quick



ACROSS

1 __ out : protruded outward? (6)
4 Jeers at (6)
7 Yellow part of an egg (4)
8 Was prominent? (5,3)
9 Prevent (7)
12 Cyberspace (3)
14 Hebrew judge (6)
15 Evades or eludes (6)
16 Robot drama by Karel Capek (3)
18 Freudian psychiatrist (7)
22 Colossal (8)
23 Plate (4)
24 Sluggish creatures? (6)
25 Joined or blended gradually (6)

DOWN

1 Area home to the City Central Library (9)
2 Difficult task to perform (4,5)
3 Ex-P.M. Morarjibhai ___ (5)
4 Hurry away on a two-wheeler ? (5)
5 Against the ____ : not much probability of a specified outcome ? (4)
6 Lucky accident (5)
10 Alto violin (5)
11 Diplomatic messenger (5)
12 Making wood carvings (9)
13 Pleaded, solicited or supplicated (9)
17 Alliance (5)
19 Sa, re, ga...;do, re, me...et al.? (5)
20 Substitute doctor (5)
21 Ancient Indic language (4)

Quoteuncode

This puzzle is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that Q equals C, it will equal C throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

Today's CLUE: B EQUALS G

ENJTTJZ RFJ LMXTJ PMX ARV BWOJ PWLMXYL FJIJIEJFWVB, RVZ LRSJ PWLMXYL DXFBJLL-WVB.

Linemaro

If your heart were a prison, I would like to be sentenced for life

Mindchow

Success is the ability to go from one failure to another with no loss of enthusiasm

Joke of the day

During exams, you are permitted to look down for inspiration and up in exasperation, but you aren't permitted to look side to side for information

Loop

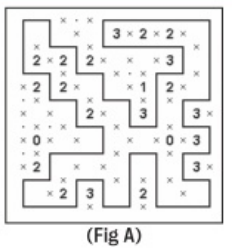
Rules

» Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A). » Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B). » Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines. » You can't draw lines around zeros. » Each puzzle has just one unique solution.

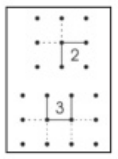
How to begin:

Example (Fig A) – Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

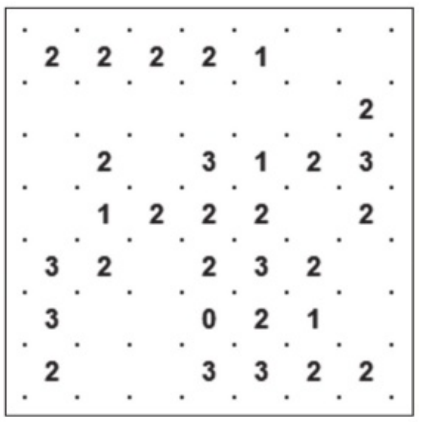
Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a dead-end (Fig B)



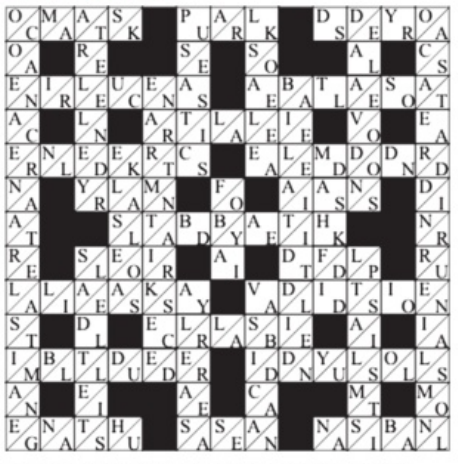
(Fig A)



(Fig B) Not Allowed



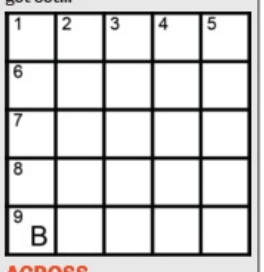
Strikeout



This crossword has no clues and the answer is there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it in each square. You have a choice of two letters, one of which you must strike out. If you choose correctly, you will be left with a grid that contains real words.

Fast five

How long do you think it will take you to unscramble the ten words shown below and fit them correctly into the grid in the order given one letter has already been entered to get you started? on your marks, get set...



ACROSS

1 Scram; 6 Rap me; 7 True I; 8 Maine; 9 A debt

DOWN

1 Mr Cub; 2 Irate; 3 Meant; 4 A ream; 5 I sped

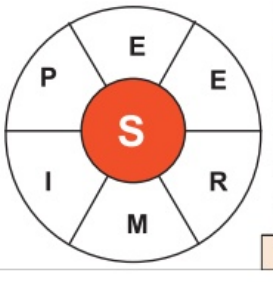
Mensapuzzle

The left set of six numbers has a relationship to the set of six numbers below. The two sets of six boxes on the left have the same relationship as the two sets of six boxes on the right. Which set of numbers should therefore replace the question marks?

A	11	5	8	7	9	9
B	9	7	6	8	7	11
C	10	6	7	7	8	10
D	10	6	7	8	9	11
E	1	1	1	1	1	10

6	4	2	5	4	1		7	2	4	3	5	6
9	8	5	9	7	5		?	?	?	?	?	?

Bull's eye



How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Every word must contain the central letter. There should be one seven-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as a reference.

09 Average; 10 Good; 12 Outstanding

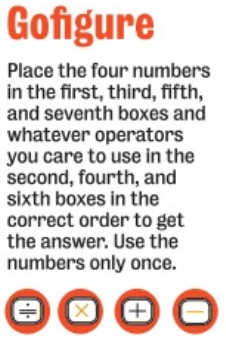
SudokuChallenge

			3		6			
	5	9				7	6	
6		7		5		1		8
		6	2		7	8		
	7						1	
		5	9		1	3		
5		1		9		2		6
	2	3				4	5	
			5		3			

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from one to nine must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Gofigure

Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once.



HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

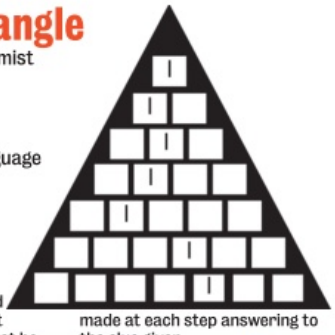
Differences: 1. Paper on desk is moved. 2. Paper in hand is longer. 3. Frame is added around window. 4. Back of chair is lower. 5. Man has more hair. 6. Man's finger is moved.

Riddler

Lab technician Ian orders equal numbers of £3, £4 and £4.50 electrical components for £126.50. How many electrical components did he order altogether?

Alpha triangle

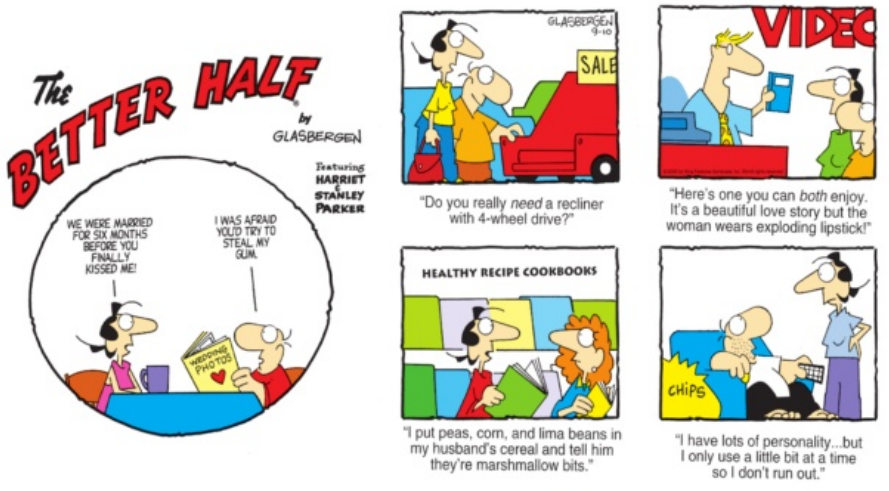
1 Iodine for the chemist
2 Not out
3 Sermon topic
4 Noises
5 Female red deer
6 Scandinavian language
7 Dapper, debonair

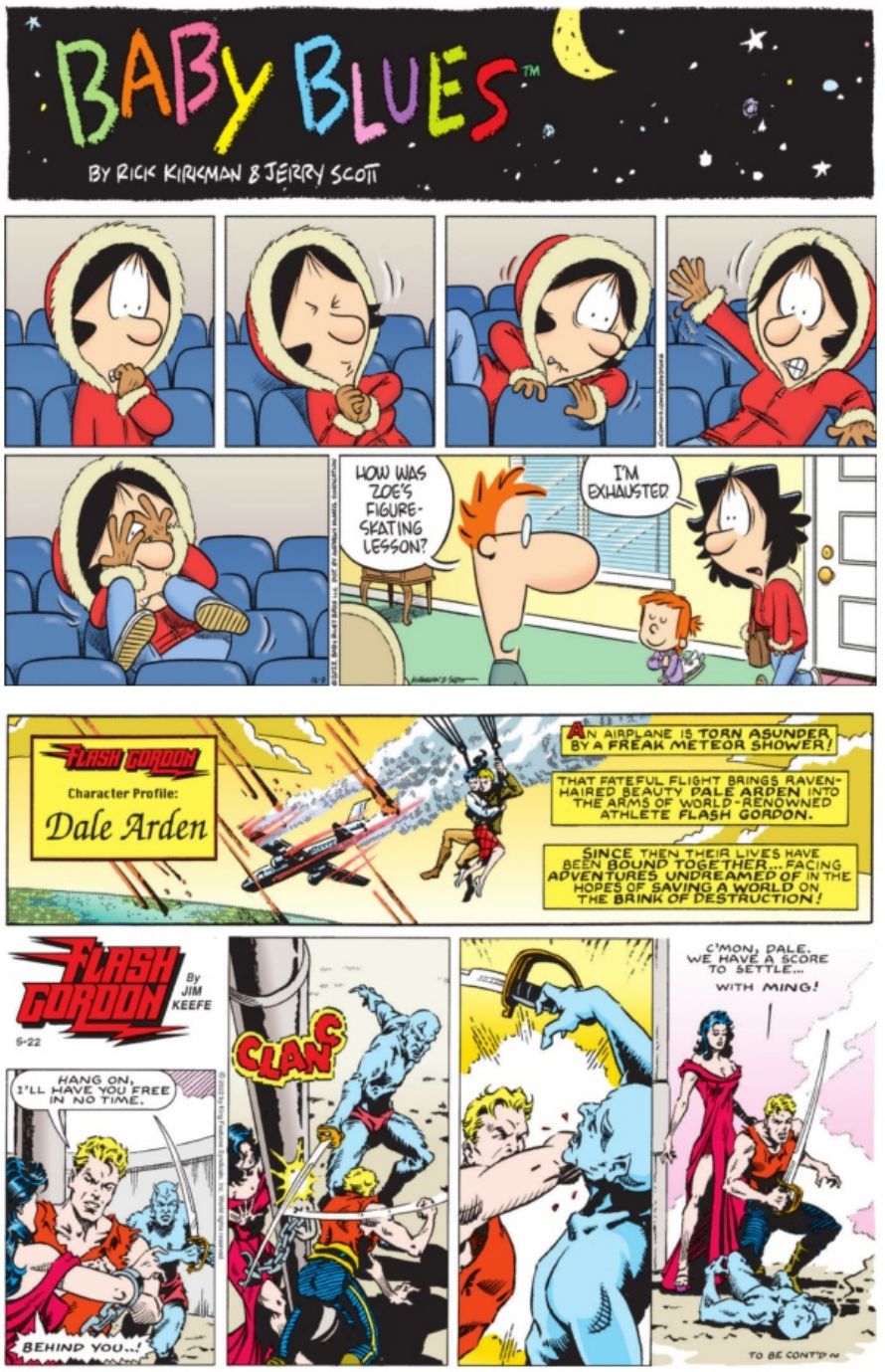


Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven-letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

DIFFICULT TO SOLVE? FIND THESE SOLUTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE »

COMICS


The BETTER HALF
by GLASBERGEN
featuring HARRIET & STANLEY PARKER
WE WERE MARRIED FOR SIX MONTHS BEFORE YOU FINALLY KISSED ME!
I WAS AFRAID YOU'D TRY TO STEAL MY GUM.
WEDDING PHOTOS
GLASBERGEN 9-10
SALE
"Do you really *need* a recliner with 4-wheel drive?"
VIDEO
"Here's one you can *both* enjoy. It's a beautiful love story but the woman wears exploding lipstick!"
HEALTHY RECIPE COOKBOOKS
"I put peas, corn, and lima beans in my husband's cereal and tell him they're marshmallow bits."
CHIPS
"I have lots of personality...but I only use a little bit at a time so I don't run out."



FLASH GORDON
Character Profile:
Dale Arden
AN AIRPLANE IS TORN ASUNDER BY A FREAK METEOR SHOWER!
THAT FATEFUL FLIGHT BRINGS RAVEN-HAIRED BEAUTY DALE ARDEN INTO THE ARMS OF WORLD-RENOWNED ATHLETE FLASH GORDON.
SINCE THEN THEIR LIVES HAVE BEEN BOUND TOGETHER... FACING ADVENTURES UNDREAMED OF IN THE HOPES OF SAVING A WORLD ON THE BRINK OF DESTRUCTION!
FLASH GORDON
By JIM KEEFE
5-22
HANG ON, I'LL HAVE YOU FREE IN NO TIME.
BEHIND YOU..!
CLANG
C'MON, DALE. WE HAVE A SCORE TO SETTLE... WITH MING!
TO BE CONT'D

WHAT YOUR STARS SAY TODAY

Aries Mar 21 – Apr 20
Today, you may be able to implement business plans successfully with the support of your subordinates. You may be involved in some social or family gatherings, which may boost your network. You are likely to go for short business-related travels, which may benefit you in the near future.

Taurus Apr 21 – May 20
Today is a good day; your financial health is likely to be good. You may benefit from your past investments. You may control your spending on worthless items, which may boost your savings. Lovebirds are advised to be polite in conversations with their partners; otherwise, conflicts may arise.

Gemini May 21 – Jun 21
Today, you are blessed by the moon, making it a good day for you. You have good vitality and energy. You may enjoy work and romantic moments with your spouse, improving family harmony. You are likely to make new plans to start a new project, and your perfection may help you design the flow chart. Job aspirants will find good job opportunities. Lovebirds are advised to avoid discussions on irrelevant topics.

Cancer Jun 22 – July 23
Today, you may feel disappointed. You are advised to control your arrogance; otherwise, you may face losses due to speaking harshly with others. Lovebirds should be careful in discussions; otherwise, it may affect their relationship.

Leo Jul 24 – Aug 23
Today, you are blessed by the moon; new sources of income may open up for you. Your past investments will start paying off in terms of profits. Your losses will convert into profits, boosting your financial health. Health issues related to parents may be resolved.

Virgo Aug 24 – Sep 23
Today, you may be very happy, and you will be busy at work. Your seniors may appreciate your work, and you may see changes in your position or responsibilities at work, possibly through promotions. Your opponents and hidden enemies may now be under control. Singles and lovebirds may make important decisions regarding marriage with the help of relatives or friends.

Libra Sep 24 – Oct 22
Today, the messy situation of the past days is under control. You are blessed by the moon. You may initiate postponed tasks and may be rewarded for your hard work. There may be gains in your business, boosting your finances. You may spend money on artefacts or literature and plan for overseas travel.

Scorpio Oct 23 – Nov 22
Today, you may be busy with family issues. You may explore extra sources of income and take an interest in artefacts, movies, and glamour, improving your creativity. Lovebirds have a clear view of their relationships. Students may now move forward towards their career goals.

Sagittarius Nov 23 – Dec 22
Today, you may not feel well and might have health issues, affecting your personal and professional life. Your spouse's health issues may upset you, and your patience may be tested. Avoid making investments in new business projects to prevent losses. Students are advised to avoid distractions and focus on their studies.

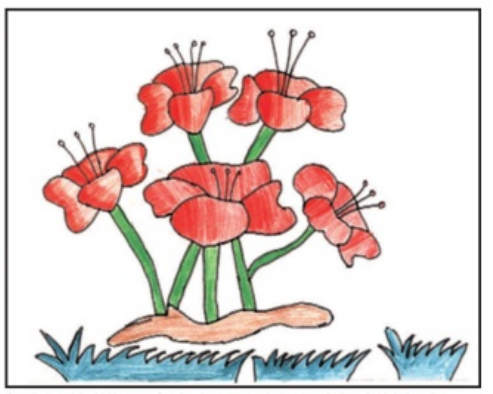
Capricorn Dec 23 – Jan 20
Today, you are blessed by a positive moon. You may feel healthy, and old health issues may be cured. The amount stuck somewhere may be recovered, and you may apply for a loan to buy luxury items.

Aquarius Jan 21 – Feb 19
Today, you may feel dull, making you lazy and careless. You may be unfocused at work, and impatience may negatively affect you. Concerns about kids' and spouse's health may upset you. Avoid making investments in assets and arguments in family matters.

Pisces Feb 20 – Mar 20
Today, you may encounter negative vibrations, making you unhappy. Avoid investing in worthless assets and do not expect much support from friends, as it may disappoint you further. Follow your intuition before making important decisions today.

KIDZONE

Sanjanaa V, 5 Years, D R D O K G School, C V Raman Nagar



Om Priya M, 11 Years, Seshadripuram Primary School, Yelahanka

Kidzone, Bangalore Mirror, No. 74/2, Sanjana Plaza, 4th & 5th Floor, Elephant Rock Road, Jayanagar 3rd block, Bengaluru-560 011;
Please send hard copies of your artwork in A4 size only.

SOLUTIONS

SOLVE IN 1M
$0.5\sqrt{[4]} = 4^{\cdot}(1/2)$
$= 4^2 = 16$
$16^{4.5-0.5}$
16^4
16–1
15

RIDDLER
33 electrical components

BULL'S EYE
mister, PREMISE, prism, rise, seem, seep, seer, simper, sire, sperm, spire, spree

FAST FIVE

C	R	A	M	S
R	E	M	A	P
U	T	E	R	I
M	I	N	A	E
B	A	T	E	D

STRIKE OUT

G	A	S	H		S	E	N		A	S	A	N		
N		E		A		A		M		O				
T		D	E	R	A	S	E		A		I			
A	L	A	S	K	A		A	L	I	S	O	N		
R		L	E	R		I		T	D	P		U		
T		S	A	B	B	A	T	H				N		
N		Y	A	M		F		I	A	N		I		
	O	B	V	I	A	T	E		W	E	B			
C	N		A	T	A	L	E		V		E			
N	I	E	C	E	S		A	B	L	E	S	T		
O		R		E		O			L		C			
C	A	T	S		P	A	K		S	E	R	A		

QUICK

J	U	T	T	E	D		S	C	O	F	E	S		
A		A		E		C		D		L				
Y	O	L	O	K		S	T	O	O	D	O	U	T	
A		L		A		O		S		K				
N		O	B	V	I	A	T	E		W	E	B		
A		R		I		N		H			E			
G	I	D	E	O	N		A	V	O	I	D	S		
R		U		A	N	A	L	Y	S	T		E		
A		E		L		T		O		P		U		
G	I	G	A	N	T	I	C		D	I	S	H		
N		P		O		O				L		C		
R	E	V	E	R	S	E		A		A		I		
A	L	A	S	K	A		A	L	I	S	O	N		
T		S	A	B	B	A	T	H				N		
N		Y	A	M		F		I	A	N		I		
	O	B	V	I	A	T	E		W	E	B			
C	N		A	T	A	L	E		V		E			
N	I	E	C	E	S		A	B	L	E	S	T		
O		R		E		O			L		C			
C	A	T	S		P	A	K		S	E	R	A		

MENSA PUZZLE
C: add 3 to the first, third and fifth numbers. Add 4 to the second, fourth and sixth numbers.

QUOTE UNCODE
Blessed are those who can give without remembering, and take without forgetting.

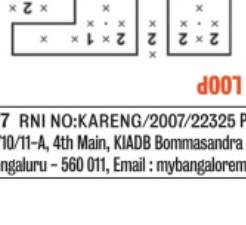
SUDOKU

2	1	8	3	7	6	5	9	4
4	5	9	1	8	2	7	6	3
6	3	7	4	5	9	1	2	8
1	9	6	2	3	7	8	4	5
3	7	2	8	4	5	6	1	9
8	4	5	9	6	1	3	7	2
5	8	1	7	9	4	2	3	6
9	2	3	6	1	8	4	5	7
7	6	4	5	2	3	9	8	1

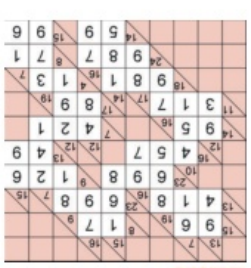
ALPHA TRIANGLE
I, In, Sin, Dins, Hinds, Danish, Dashing.

GO FIGURE
Easy
$5 + 9 + 4 - 2 = 14$
Medium
$5 + 8 - 9 + 7 = 11$
Hard
$9 - 2 - 4 \times 2 = 6$

LOOP



KAKURO



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What's in a stage name?
Emma Stone has expressed her desire to revert to her birth name, Emily. Stone, whose real name is Emily Jean Stone, shared her longing to embrace her original identity once again

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Cultural harmony

PC reveals how she and Nick handle cultural disparity between them

Priyanka Chopra recently delved into the cultural disparities between herself and husband Nick Jonas, revealing how they navigated these differences six years into their marriage.

Despite both hailing from large families, Priyanka Chopra disclosed that their upbringing in terms of cultural background was notably distinct, requiring them to adapt and compromise to achieve harmony.

In a candid conversation on the Read the Room podcast, Priyanka Chopra shared their mutual appreciation for each other's home countries and their willingness to embrace diverse cultures. She elaborated on the cultural elements that posed challenges, such as the contrasting communication styles between her Indian family and the Jonas family.

Priyanka humorously recounted the Indian tendency to speak over each other's sentences, contrasting it with the more structured communication dynamics in the Jonas household. Adapting to these differences proved to be a significant learning curve for both Chopra and Jonas. The actress highlighted the adjustment she had to make in terms of communication, emphasizing the importance of patiently waiting for someone to finish their sentences, contrary to the more assertive approach she was accustomed to.

Conversely, Jonas had to acclimate to the more boisterous and interruptive communication style prevalent in Chopra's family.

Despite having spent a considerable portion of her life in the US during her teenage years, Priyanka Chopra admitted that adapting to these cultural differences was a significant shift for her. Conversely, Jonas, who had limited exposure to Indian culture before marrying Chopra, has since embraced it through multiple visits to India, including celebrating festivals with Chopra's extended family.

–ETimes

Stuck in a flight

Actress Aditi Rao Hydari found herself stuck in a flight early in the morning in Mumbai when there was "no ladder nor an airbridge," describing it as "new lows every day."

Aditi took to her Instagram stories and shared a picture of the airport from her flight window after it had landed.

The actress captioned it: "New lows every day! No ladder nor an airbridge. While we watch the 12.10 a.m. airport circus. Stranded @vistara #mumbaiairportterminal2."

On the work front, 'Heeramandi: The Diamond Bazaar' is a period drama by Sanjay Leela Bhansali, marking his debut in the world of the web.

– IANS

Simply put

Actress Parineeti Chopra, who has been receiving a lot of positive response to her work in the recently released streaming series 'Amar Singh Chamkila', opened up on financial challenges during the initial phase of her career. The actress said that she was asked by her advisors to hire a fitness expert and a nutritionist and pay them Rs 4 lakh a month to lose weight. This was something that she could not afford especially when she was paid Rs 5 lakh for her first film.

Talking to Raj Shamani on his podcast, Parineeti said that she doesn't come from a very rich background.

She said, "I'm actually a very simple, middle-class girl. I genuinely don't understand Bollywood.I don't have these high-flying friends. I don't have a trainer, stylist, everything already ready for me. And people who were already from here and already knew this world judged me a lot."

–IANS

SANDALWOOD SHOTS

Y MAHESWARA REDDY

Top pick

The team of Kenda is on cloud nine since the movie was selected for screening at Dada Saheb Phalke Film Festival in New Delhi on April 30. Cinematographer-turned-director Sahadev Kelvadi debuts as director with Kenda which is scheduled for release at theaters in June.

"The jury members follow some norms to select a movie for screening at Dada Saheb Phalke Film Festival. This selection adds an immense value to our movie," said Kelvadi. He said he was not aware if other Kannada films have been selected too.

"We have received an email from the organisers of Dada Saheb Phalke Film Festival informing us about the selection of Kenda for screening at the festival," he said.

On his next directorial movie, he said that he would take a decision on it only after the release of Kenda at theaters in June.

"There are some interesting scripts but I have yet to make a decision on my next movie," he said.

The movie Kenda is a political satire revolving around a person working in a foundry in Bengaluru. It is said the movie delves into social aspects, including politics and crime. It is bankrolled by Roopa Rao who directed Kannada movie Gantumoote. Kenda features Bharath BV, Pranav Sridhar, and Vinod Ravindran.

Shoot done

Music director B Ajaneesh Loknath is bankrolling the film Just Married under the Abbs Studios banner. The movie's shooting is completed and post-productions work is in progress. The movie is helmed by CR Bobby, a woman music director. It is her maiden Kannada movie as a director. She is also co-producer.

Just Married was shot for 45 days in and around Bengaluru, Mysuru, and Chikmagalur. "I have been associated with the Kannada film industry for more than 20 years. This experience has helped me complete the talkie portion and five songs of the movie in 45 days," said Bobby.

The director said that she wrote three to four scripts and found the script of Just Married as an apt subject. "Just Married has all elements that are necessary to connect with all types of audiences with the movie. It is a love story with action, sentiment and comedy," she said.

Bigg Boss fame Shine Shetty and Ankita Amar are the lead pair. One of the songs – Abhimaaniyaagihode – released recently became popular among music lovers. It is sung by Vijay Prakash and written by Pramod Maravanthe.

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